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Review of Yvette Bürki and Henriette Partzsch, eds,
*Redes de Comunicación: Estudios sobre la Prensa en el
Mundo Hispanohablante* (2016)

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Reviews

Yvette Bürki and Henriette Partzsch, eds, *Redes de Comunicación: Estudios sobre la Prensa en el Mundo Hispanohablante* (Berlin: Frank & Timme, 2016). 390 pp. ISBN 978-3-7329-0129-6

Redes de Comunicación: Estudios sobre la Prensa en el Mundo Hispanohablante is the result of a fruitful cooperation between Yvette Bürki (University of Bern), a specialist in Spanish linguistics and discourse analysis, and Henriette Partzsch (University of Glasgow), a specialist in Spanish women writers of the early modern period. Both of them have contributed to their respective fields of expertise through the publication of a significant number of books, articles, and two bilingual editions that appeared in 2008 and 2009 respectively. However, this is the first time that Yvette Bürki and Henriette Partzsch have joined forces, and the result is an outstanding contribution to the thriving field of periodical studies.

The book aims to provide original approaches to the decisive sociocultural and discursive impact of the press on the formation of transnational Spanish-speaking networks. It includes contributions from sixteen scholars, most of whom are specialists in literary theory and networks that were developed during the long nineteenth and twentieth centuries, either in a Spanish or in a Latin American context. In their introduction, Bürki and Partzsch give an overview of the collection's contributions, and highlight the key role of the press in disseminating ideas and in constructing national or cultural identities. They also stress the transnational and interdisciplinary character of the networks that are described, interpreted and analyzed throughout the book. These networks of cooperation and dissemination are particularly broad-ranging, reaching as far as Manila, New York, Thessaloniki, Madrid, Buenos Aires, and Santiago de Chile.

The introduction is followed by four chapters of unequal length. The first chapter includes three contributions that focus on the evolution of the press from the early nineteenth to the early twenty-first century. The temporal scope of research in the ad hoc studies of the periodicals is not constrained by the limitations of traditional periodization, and thus lends itself well to wide-ranging and transdisciplinary views concerning the political, socioeconomic, and industrial contexts from which periodicals emerged. For instance, in her contribution Annette Paatz (University of Göttingen) illustrates that prominent political figures who had experienced exile in Chile spoke of the need for a more sustainable and informative Argentinian press. Another subject of particular prominence is the reception of the nineteenth-century press by the general public. According to Paatz, Latin American editors who promoted European traditions and themes fostered a more heterogeneous and diverse collective identity that was welcomed by the public. Moving forward to the twentieth century, Uta Helfrich (University of Göttingen) argues that technological progress engenders a notable strengthening of transnational networks. By taking into account the enormous impact of online publications, Helfrich anticipates the rise of new periodical genres that aim to revolutionize our understanding of the press.

In the second and lengthiest chapter of the book, the contributors discuss the role of ideology in the making of a periodical. Benedict Anderson's concept of 'imagined communities' (1983) seems to have a prominent place in the analyses, since periodicals are seen as nodes in a large

scale network of communications that bring together people who share common political, cultural, or national identities. In that respect, Arturo Fernández Gibert (California State University) argues that the incorporation of New Mexico by the United States in 1850 provoked a decisive division among people of different social and linguistic orientation. Subsequently, the role of the American press was to unify a highly-divided community of people by encouraging them to use English as their primary language. Jaume Guillaumet (University Pompeu Fabra) considers a similar case, but in the context of Spain's liberation from Franco's dictatorship. According to Guillaumet, the Catalan press played a central role in the revival of the language after its fierce abolition between 1939 and 1975. All these examples are used to illustrate the growing influence of the press in the context of a modern and rapidly changing world. Each contribution is backed by an extended bibliography that entices the readers to deepen their knowledge about the impact and functions of the press throughout the centuries. In addition, the thorough study of networks developed across different communities aims to provide an innovative perspective on the importance of cultural, linguistic, and intellectual exchanges.

In the book's third chapter, Bürki along with Aitor García Moreno (Spanish National Research Council) dedicate an extended piece to the emergence, at the beginning of the twentieth century, of three different Sephardi communities in Istanbul, Thessaloniki, and New York, respectively. In this contribution, Bürki and Moreno explore the interrelationships between language and ethnicity as depicted in the pages of three Judeo-Spanish periodicals: *El Juguetón*, *El Riñón*, and *La Vara*. These fascinating case studies reveal the cultural authority of the press and its decisive impact on transnational communities. This study is followed by Partzsch's contribution in the fourth and final chapter of the book, in which she highlights the importance of the female press during the 1860s. Partzsch

discusses the rise of modern consumerist culture as depicted in the pages of three fashion periodicals edited by women: *La Moda elegante ilustrada* (Cadiz, 1842), *El Ángel del hogar* (Madrid, 1864), and *La Violeta* (Madrid, 1863). This contribution offers an interesting lens through which to examine Spanish women's active participation in shaping social and cultural changes. The rise of a new capitalist society that was open to foreign trends and influences (mainly Parisian when it comes to the field of fashion) is contrasted to a conservative society that gave no space to women's desires and aspirations. Partzsch's promising analysis opens new horizons not only in the field of periodical studies, but also in the fields of cultural and gender studies.

The epilogue of the book encapsulates the essential functions of the press and offers a significant insight on the future of periodical studies. Amelia Sanz (University of Madrid) draws our attention to the new perspectives created by the massive digitization of nineteenth-century periodicals, intended to expand our knowledge and enrich our understanding of the past. In conclusion, the whole book paves the way for a new approach in periodical studies that pays specific attention to the central role of contemporary technologies in the evolution of the press. Although there is a general focus on Spanish-speaking countries throughout the book, the editors make sure to widen its scope by including valuable information on periodicals that were edited in countries such as the United States, the Philippines, Turkey, and Greece. The book is at its best when it focuses on the coming together of multicultural communities and transnational networks which are developed and expanded through the growing power and impact of the press. These valuable contributions deserve translation so that their insights might reach a wider and more diverse audience.

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